YSLAIRE

SAMBRE

Cursed be the fruit of thy womb...

V

Glénat

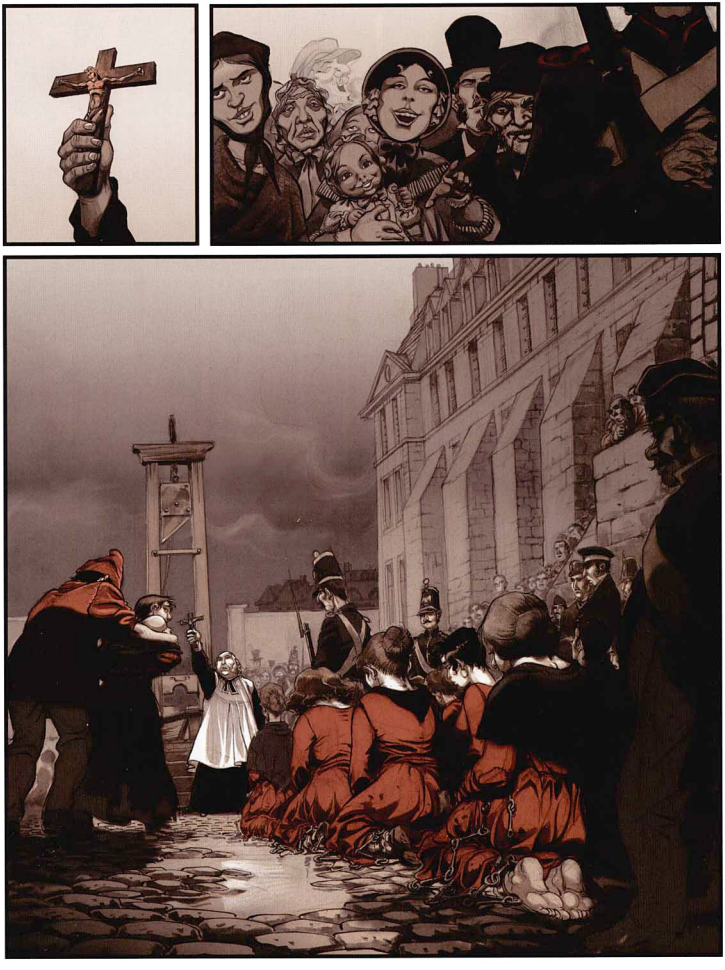
YSLAIRE

CHAPTER 5 - THE THIRD GENERATION (1856 - 1871)

SAMBRE

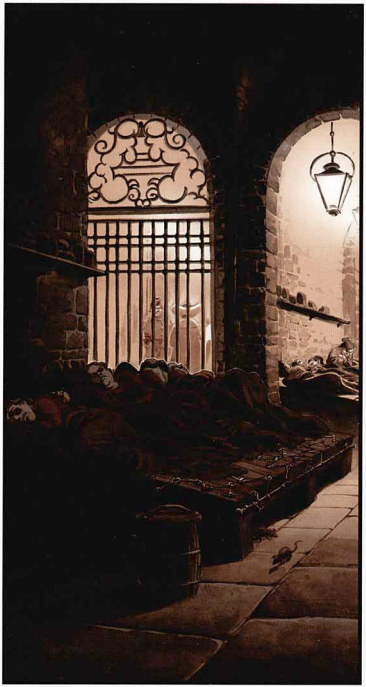
Cursed be the fruit of thy womb...

Glénat



PRAY FOR YOUR SOUL AND REPENT, WRETCHED SINNER!
FOR WHAT? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!
SO, NO?... HE AIN'T KIDDING...
...FORGIVE HER, LORD, SHE KNOWS NOT WHAT SHE DOES...
THAT'S RIGHT! LAUGH IT UP, YOU FEISTY BITCH! YOU'RE GONNA DIE...
THAT'S WHY I'M LAUGHING, EXECUTIONER... YOU CAN'T KILL SOMEONE WHO'S ALREADY DEAD!!!

DOES THIS BITCH LOOK LIKE SHE'S LAUGHING NOW? PRAY FOR HER SOUL!
PRAY FOR HER SOUL!
YOU ALL HEAR THAT? PRAY!! HAIL MARY...
...FULL OF GRACE. THE LORD IS WITH THEE...
...AND MAY THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB BE...
...CURSED...
YES, IN THE THIRD ROW... THE GIRL WITH BLACK HAIR AND RED EYES... CONDEMNED TO FORCED LABOR FOR VARIOUS CRIMES AND REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES... SHE'S PIG-HEADED, BEEN DISCIPLINED COUNTLESS TIMES... ALMOST LIKE SHE WANTS TO BE PUNISHED... BUT WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS PARTICULAR GIRL?
NOT ME, WARDEN. THE EMPEROR! I AM ONLY CARRYING OUT HIS WISHES...
WOULD YOU BELIEVE THAT HIS MAJESTY HIMSELF HAS DEFINED THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A FORTUNATE FEW WOMEN FOR DEPORTATION? YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL, AND CHILDLESS...



WOT'S WRONG WITH YE, GIRLIE? YE CRYIN OVER THAT SKANK? AFTER WOT SHE DID TO YE?
...I'M NOT SAD, I'M ANGRY!!...

...SHE WAS RIGHT TO LAUGH! WE'RE THE ONES DYING IN HERE! SHE... SHE'S BETTER OFF NOW...
HEY NOW, DON'T CRY...

...EH!?... WHAT ARE YOU...?
DON'T GET ALL WORKED UP, I'M TRYIN TO RELAX YE!... YE'RE MINE NOW, LITTLE ONE!

...WHY WOULDN'T I EXAMINE EVERY INCH OF MY NEW TOY?...

PLEASE, LET GO OF ME...
LEAST IT AIN'T THE GUILLOTINE! DON'T ACT LIKE YE AIN'T HAD IT BEFORE, DEARIE!

...TELL ME... HOW MANY HAVE BEEN DOWN THERE ALREADY?

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? GET THE GUARDS! GUAAAARDS!!

GET UP, 3492! IT'S YOUR LUCKY DAY...

...YOU'VE BEEN INVITED TO SEE THE PRISON WARDEN... MAKE YOURSELF PRESENTABLE, YOU SMELL LIKE AN OLD GOAT!

REALLY?... WHAT ABOUT ME? WHY AM I ROTTING IN HERE? THAT AIN'T FAIR!
EASY, BIG GAL. YOU'LL GET YOUR TURN!

IN THAT CASE, GET YERSELF ALL PRETTIED UP, MY TOY! YE AIN'T GETTING AWAY FROM ME THAT EASY!
KEEP TALKING, YOU SIMPLETON! THE DEVIL WILL HAVE ME BEFORE YOU DO!

YOU JUST DON'T GIVE UP, EH? YOU DO REALIZE THAT SIMPLETON'S BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN YOU...
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF: I NEVER GIVE UP!!
I DON'T DOUBT IT! BREST'S CEMETERY IS FULL OF GIRLS JUST AS HARD-HEADED AS YOU!

IF ONLY YOU KNEW, MY FRIEND, HOW MUCH I'VE WISHED I COULD JOIN THEM...

THERE YOU ARE, 3492! COME...

THAT'S IT, COME HERE, WOMAN! IF YOU KNEW WHAT WAS IN STORE FOR YOU...

...JULIE SAINTANGE, BORN IN BOQUEVAIRE. ARRESTED JUNE 26TH, 1848 FOR REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES, SENTENCED TO A LIFE OF FORCED LABOR FOR HOMICIDE AND CRIMES AGAINST THE STATE... DEPORTED TO ALGERIA, THEN TRANSFERRED HERE, TO BREST, THREE YEARS AGO...

...YOU ALSO HAVE A CHILD, IT WOULD SEEM... THOUGH YOU'VE NEVER BEEN MARRIED, CORRECT?

HM?... ACCORDING TO YOUR FILE, JULIE SAINTANGE GAVE BIRTH TO TWO CHILDREN DURING THE INSURRECTION IN JUNE OF '48. TWO ILLEGITIMATE TWINS... THE FIRST, A GIRL, WAS STILLBORN. AS FOR THE SECOND, A BOY, YOU ABANDONED HIM OVER 8 YEARS AGO AND...

MY CHILD WAS STOLEN FROM ME!! THAT'S THE TRUTH!!

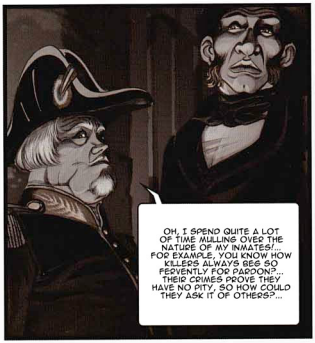
WATCH YOUR TONE, 3492! ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR WHO CAPTURED YOU, YOU GAVE BIRTH AT A BARRICADE WHILE TAKING COVER FROM GUNFIRE, THEN LEFT THE CHILD ON THE PAVEMENT...

I HID HIM UNDER AN OLD CARRIAGE. I HAD SEEN SOLDIERS IMPALING NEWBORNS ON THEIR BAYONETS... FOR REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES, I SUPPOSE!
SAVE THE SARCASM, 3492... A SINGLE MOTHER HAS NO RIGHT TO LECTURE OTHERS!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY SON?
YOU KNOW FULL WELL, MISS. THE GOVERNMENT PLACES HOMELESS CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE. ASSUMING SOME CHARITABLE SOUL DOESN'T DECIDE TO TAKE THEM IN...
IT WOULD SEEM THAT YOUR SON, HOWEVER, FOUND JUST SUCH A PERSON...
REALLY?
I'M SORRY, YOUR FILE DOESN'T MENTION HIS NAME... THOUGH I WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO TELL YOU ANYWAY...
BESIDES, YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY. IT WOULD SEEM YOUR CHILD'S FATE WAS FOR THE BEST. THIS WAY HE WON'T FOLLOW THE SAME PATH AS HIS MOTHER...
SAVE YOUR SYMPATHIES, WARDEN! YOU AND THE CLERGY, ALWAYS WITH YOUR FEIGNED COMPASSION! I SPIT ON YOU ALL!
JUST GET TO THE POINT, WARDEN. SHE HAS NO INTEREST IN YOUR SYMPATHIES!
I AM THE ONE WHO PLUCKED THIS LITTLE STREET FLOWER! AND BELIEVE ME, EVEN REPLANTED IN NEW, HEALTHY SOIL, IT WILL NEVER GROW GREATER THAN ITS ROOTS ALLOW...
MM... AHEM! AS A GOOD CHRISTIAN, I BELIEVE IN REDEMPTION, AND...
...REDEMPTION?...

...AH, YES, REDEMPTION! YES! THAT'S ONE WAY OF PUTTING IT! HA HA! GO AHEAD AND EXPLAIN IT TO HER, THEN!
...AHEM. YES, YES! NOW MISS, HIS MAJESTY NAPOLEON III, IN HIS INFINITE MAGNANIMITY, HAS DECIDED TO GRANT PARDON TO ENEMIES OF THE STATE. THUS, THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE HAS SENT COMMISSIONER GUIZOT TO EXPLAIN TO YOU AND SEVERAL OTHERS THE CONDITIONS OF THIS GREAT FAVOR YOU'VE BEEN GRANTED...
...A NEW LIFE AWAITS YOU IN GUYANA, 3449!
IN CAYENNE, TO BE MORE PRECISE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO DEPORT YOUR CONTEMPORARIES OUT OF THE POPULATION CENTERS TO CREATE A NEW COLONY. WOMEN CONDEMNED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT MAY TRAVEL THERE, SETTLE DOWN, AND MARRY...
...YES, THAT'S RIGHT! MARRY!... START A FAMILY. TAKE ON A FAMILY NAME. HAVE CHILDREN... IT'S YOUR DREAM COME TRUE!
...A NEW LIFE...
...DO YOU UNDERSTAND, MISS? YOU ARE FREE TO REFUSE!
THE DECREE SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THE WOMEN MAY ONLY GO VOLUNTARILY.
...FREE? REALLY?...
COME CLOSER, WARDEN. I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU... FOR YOUR KINDNESS...
STOP HER!!! GUARDS!!!

GRAB HER ELBOWS! AND YOU, TAKE THIS OFF, MY SWEET...
THAT'S IT! LOOK AT ME, MY LITTLE TOY! I TOLD YE THAT YE WOULDN'T BE RID OF ME!
HOW MANY LASHES, WARDEN?
FIVE FOR REPEATED FIGHTING WITH OTHER INMATES, AND FIVE FOR ATTACKING A CIVIL SERVANT!.. BE SURE NOT TO SPARE YOUR ARM, EXECUTIONER!
IS THAT POLICY AROUND HERE, TO BEAT THE WOMEN?
MMH.. ORDINARILY PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS ARE RESERVED FOR MALE INMATES...
BUT TWENTY YEARS HERE HAVE CONVINCED ME THAT IF THERE IS SUCH A THING AS EARTHLY PURGATORY, YOU'LL FIND IT IN A PENAL COLONY... AND THIS WOMAN IS NOT LIKE THE OTHERS... HAVE YOU SEEN HER EYES?
YES. THEY'RE RED... SO WHAT? WHAT DOES THE COLOR OF HER EYES DETERMINE?
HER SOUL. EVEN THE SIMPLEST MIND COULD SEE THE HATE IN HER. THIS WOMAN WAS BORN TO TAKE VENGEANCE ON HUMANITY!


OH, I SPEND QUITE A LOT OF TIME MULLING OVER THE NATURE OF MY INMATES/. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU KNOW HOW KILLERS ALWAYS BEG SO FERVENTLY FOR PARDON?.. THEIR CRIMES PROVE THEY HAVE NO PITY, SO HOW COULD THEY ASK IT OF OTHERS?...

...BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, EVERY WOMAN IS, AT HER CORE, A MOTHER... AND WHO COULD IMAGINE A MOTHER WITHOUT PITY? THESE ARE THE THINGS I PONDER...

...I OFTEN PONDER THE MOST JUST PUNISHMENTS TO GIVE THEM...

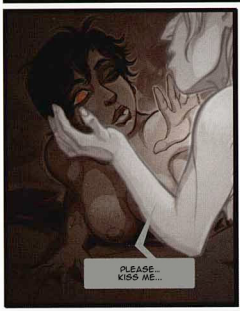
YOU KNOW, MY UNCLE USED TO BELIEVE IN AN INDIVIDUAL DESTINY RELATED TO EYE COLOR LIKE YOU. HE EVEN WROTE A PSEUDO-SCIENTIFIC THEORY ON THE SUBJECT: "THE WAR OF EYES"...
...THOUGH HE DIDN'T BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF REDEMPTION... OUTSIDE OF DEATH, THAT IS...

SHE FAINTED AFTER THE FIFTH LASH, WARDEN...
WHY ARE YE STOPPIN? COME ON MAN, HE SAID TEN LASHES! HIT HER! HIT HER MORE!
MMMH... STERILIZE HER WOUNDS AND TAKE HER BACK TO HER CELL... SHE'S ONLY A WOMAN, AFTER ALL!
...AS FOR THE OTHER PRISONER, GIVE HER THOSE FIVE LASHES SHE WAS SO EAGER ABOUT. WE MUSTN'T ENCOURAGE ENJOYMENT IN THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS...
YOU THINK SHE'LL BE BEGGING US TO GO TO CAYENNE WHEN SHE WAKES UP?
IN MY EXPERIENCE, IT'S BEST NOT TO BUSY ONESELF WITH MICROMANAGEMENT, MR. GUIZOT...
...ONE MONTH IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT WITH NOTHING BUT WATER AND DRY BREAD IS USUALLY ENOUGH TO SOFTEN THE TOUGHEST INMATES!...

JULIE?... ARE# YOU SLEEPING?

MY POOR JULIE... YOU MUST BE SUFFERING SO MUCH...

BERNARD?
YES, IT'S ME... I'VE COME TO HELP YOU ESCAPE...


PLEASE... KISS ME...

...KISS ME...

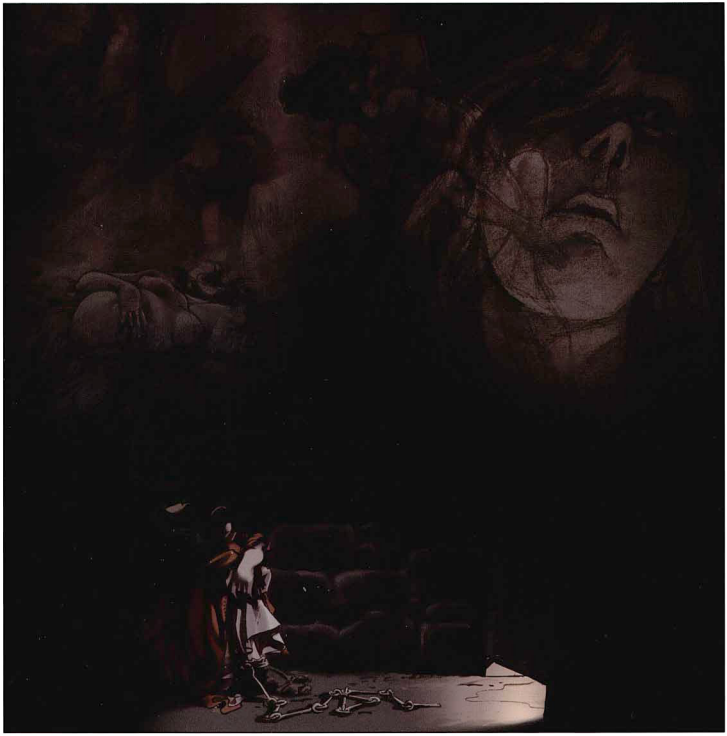
...WE'RE LIKE SISTERS, YOU AND I...
...TWIN PIECES OF DEBRIS FLOATING ON TOP OF A CESSPOOL OF FILTH...
...ONE NIGHT IN SOLITARY, FIVE LASHES, AND YOU THINK YOU'VE HIT ROCK BOTTOM?...
GET OVER YERSELF! THE ONLY ONE WHO DECIDES IF YE'VE HIT ROCK BOTTOM IS ME!
YE HEAR ME? I SWEAR I'LL BEAT YER ARSE BLOODY, MY SWEET!
COME OFF IT, YOU FAT HAG! YOU'RE ONLY FRIGHTENING THE RATS...

BREST, NOVEMBER 18, 1856

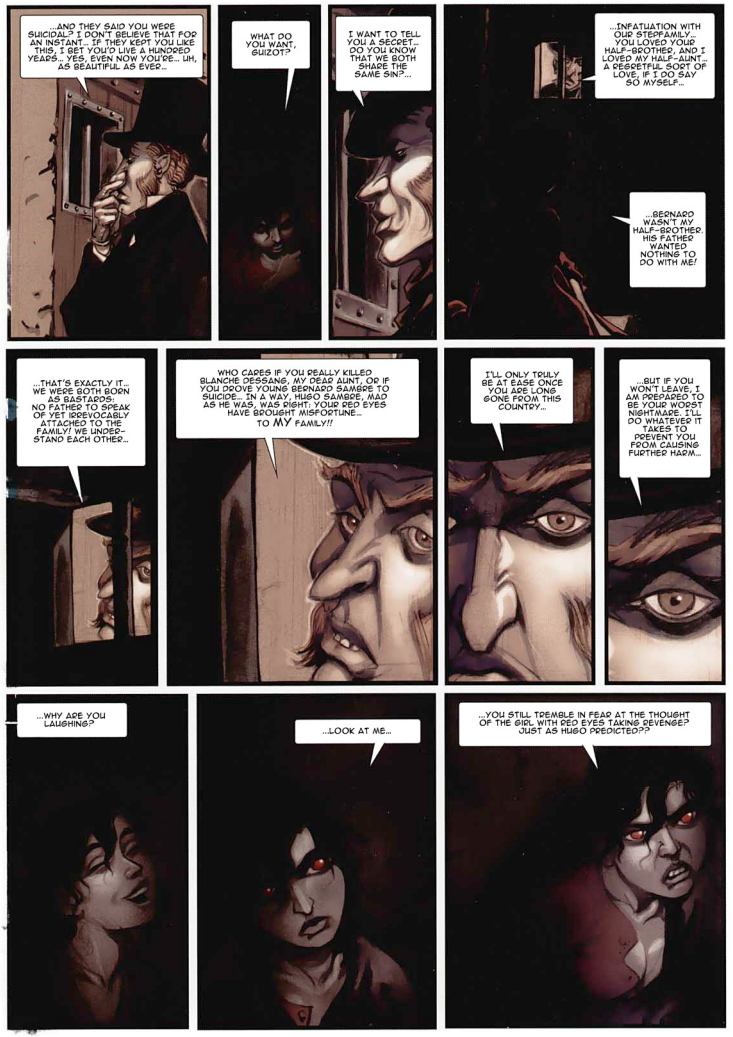
DEAR COMMISSIONER GUIZOT, YOU'VE REQUESTED NEWS OF JULIE SAINTANGE AND I AM FORCED TO ADMIT THAT A MONTH IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT HAS NOT BEEN SUFFICIENT TO BREAK HER WILL. SHE REFUSES TO EAT AND I FEAR SHE MAY NOT LAST MUCH LONGER...

...FURTHER, AS I AM SURE YOU ARE AWARE, HER PAST INVOLVEMENT WITH THE REVOLUTION HAS CONFERRED UPON HER A RARE SORT OF PRESTIGE AMONG HER FELLOW INMATES, AND HER CURRENT STRUGGLES ARE RESONATING STRONGLY WITH HER COMRADES. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT VOLUNTEERS FOR DEPORTATION ARE HARDLY IN ABUNDANCE. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS JULIE SAINTANGE IS THEREFORE ONLY INCREASING BY THE DAY. IN LIGHT OF THIS, I HAVE DECIDED TO SECRETLY KEEP HER IN ISOLATION INDEFINITELY.

SOME HOLD A THEORY THAT EIGHT MONTHS WITHOUT SEEING THE LIGHT OF DAY CAUSES A PRISONER TO REVERT TO A WILD AND SAVAGE STATE. PERSONALLY, I BELIEVE THE OPPOSITE TO BE TRUE. IF MADNESS LIVES WITHIN THEM, IT WAS ALREADY THERE BEFORE THEIR IMPRISONMENT. ANY MONK WOULD TELL YOU THE SAME: FASTING, ISOLATION, AND ASCETICISM ARE A HOLY TRIFECTA THAT LEADS TO ENLIGHTENMENT... AND I CAN ONLY HOPE THEY WILL LEAD JULIE, IN THIS CASE, TO CAYENNE...



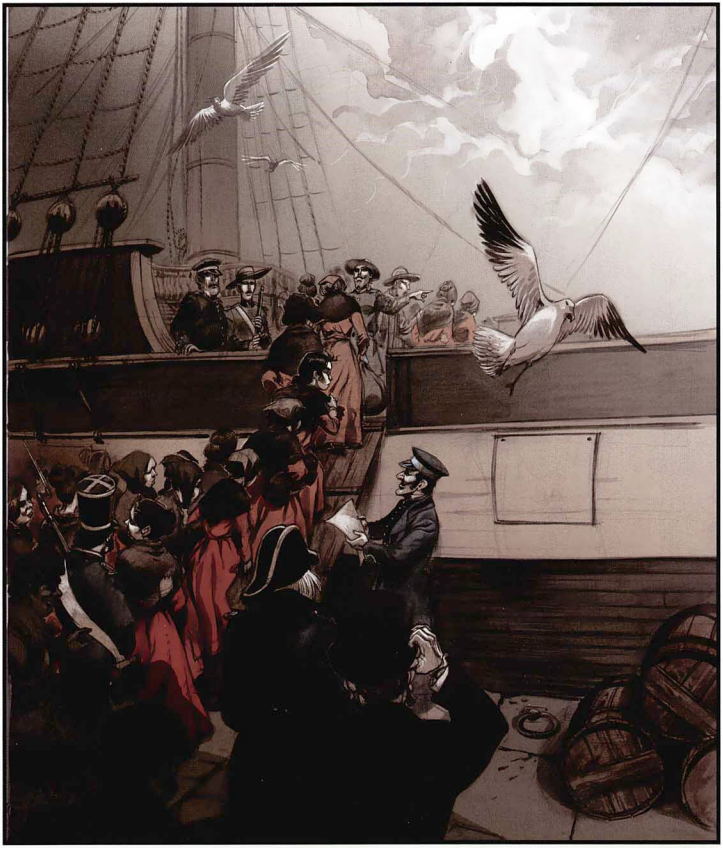
IT SEEMS YOU REALLY CAN SURVIVE ANYTHING!...


...AND THEY SAID YOU WERE SUICIDAL? I DON'T BELIEVE THAT FOR AN INSTANT... IF THEY KEPT YOU LIKE THIS, I BET YOU'D LIVE A HUNDRED YEARS... YES, EVEN NOW YOU'RE... UH, AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER...
WHAT DO YOU WANT, GUIZOT?
I WANT TO TELL YOU A SECRET... DO YOU KNOW THAT WE BOTH SHARE THE SAME SIN?...
...INFATUATION WITH OUR STEPFAMILY. YOU LOVED YOUR HALF-BROTHER, AND I LOVED MY HALF-AUNT... A DESCEITFUL SORT OF LOVE, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF...
...BERNARD WASN'T MY HALF-BROTHER. HIS FATHER WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH ME!
...THAT'S EXACTLY IT... WE WERE BOTH BORN AS BASTARDS. NO FATHER TO SPEAK OF YET IRREVOCABLY ATTACHED TO THE FAMILY! WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER...
WHO CARES IF YOU REALLY KILLED BLANCHE DESSANG, MY DEAR AUNT, OR IF YOU DROVE YOUNG BERNARD SAMBRE TO SUICIDE... IN A WAY, HUGO SAMBRE, MAD AS HE WAS, WAS RIGHT: YOUR RED EYES HAVE BROUGHT MISFORTUNE... TO MY FAMILY!!
I'LL ONLY TRULY BE AT EASE ONCE YOU ARE LONG GONE FROM THIS COUNTRY...
...BUT IF YOU WON'T LEAVE, I AM PREPARED TO BE YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE. I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO PREVENT YOU FROM CAUSING FURTHER HARM...
...WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?
...LOOK AT ME...
...YOU STILL TREMBLE IN FEAR AT THE THOUGHT OF THE GIRL WITH RED EYES TAKING REVENGE? JUST AS HUGO PREDICTED??

WELL FINE! YOU'RE RIGHT TO! KEEP THE FAMILY CRYPT OPEN, THE WORMS AWAIT THEIR MEAL!! NOT A DAY WILL GO BY WHERE I WON'T WISH FOR THE EXTINCTION OF YOUR CURSED FAMILY LINE!!
...UNTIL MY DYING BREATH, I'LL BE THE SHADOW LURKING IN YOUR FAMILY PORTRAITS, THE VOICE YOU HEAR IN YOUR HEADS THAT SCREAMS FOR VENGEANCE!! I'LL BE YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE!!
...THE WAR OF EYES IS ETERNAL, ISN'T IT, COUSIN GUIZOT? YOU'RE RIGHT, I WILL SURVIVE ANYTHING!! BE IT IN A DAY OR IN THIRTY YEARS, I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE!!!!
...SO WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF I'M EXILED OR NOT...
...YOU'RE RIGHT. WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF YOU'RE EXILED OR NOT...
...AND WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF YOU SPEND ANOTHER THIRTY YEARS ROTTING IN THESE CELLS... INSTEAD OF STARTING A NEW LIFE IN THE TROPICS?
...THAT'S RIGHT... WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE? YOUR SON? HE'S ALREADY GONE. YOU'LL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN. I'VE SEEN TO THAT PERSONALLY!
WHO ADOPTED HIM?
AT LEAST TELL ME HIS NAME...
...THE NAME YOU GAVE MY SON... THEN IT WON'T MATTER WHERE YOU SHIP ME OFF TO...
SAMBRE, OF COURSE. WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
HERE! I FIGURED I'D GIVE YOU A SOUVENIR FOR YOU TRIP...

...HIS NAME IS BERNARD-MARIE... YES, LIKE IN ALL GOOD BOURGEOIS FAMILIES, HE CARRIES THE NAME OF HIS FATHER... AND I MUST SAY HE IS QUITE ATTACHED TO HIS ADOPTED MOTHER, WHO I'M SURE IS SMART ENOUGH TO SPARE HIM THE STORY OF HIS TRUE ORIGINS...
AFTER ALL, WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHOSE WOMB A CHILD SPRINGS FROM, HE REMEMBERS NOTHING OF HIS BIRTH... THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS IS THE BREAST THAT FEEDS HIM, RIGHT?... AND THE HEART, OF COURSE! THE HEART THAT BEATS BENEATH IT! THERE'S MORE TO A WOMAN THAN JUST BREASTS, I SUPPOSE! HA HA!!
BUT HIS EYES... YOU'RE FORGETTING HIS EYES, MR. GUIZOT... DOES HE TAKE AFTER HIS MOTHER OR HIS FATHER?
A SAMBRE WITH RED EYES... THAT SURE WOULD MAKE OLD HUGO SAMBRE TURN IN HIS GRAVE, WOULDN'T IT, COUSIN?
THEY'RE BLACK, COUSIN! AS BLACK AS THOSE OF HIS FATHER AND GRANDFATHER! ALL THE BETTER TOO, THAT HE MAY HAVE A HAPPY LIFE..
WHO KNOWS, COUSIN GUIZOT, WHO KNOWS?... AFTER ALL, IT IS WRITTEN THAT I AM TO BRING HIM MISFORTUNE...

I TOLD YE, DEARIE! IT'S OUR DESTINY TO BE TOGETHER!!
..YES, THE STRONG-HEADED OUGHT TO STAY TOGETHER. TRUST ME. A FEW WEEKS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY, SHARING THE SAME SHACKLES, FIGHTING AND TRIPPING OVER EACH OTHER, YOU'LL BE IN NO SHAPE TO ESCAPE... THE DELINQUENCY OF ONE WILL CANCEL OUT THAT OF THE OTHER, IN A WAY...
..AND THE FACT THAT THEY ARE VOLUNTARILY LEAVING FOR CAYENNE SHOULD NOT DISTRACT US FROM OUR TRUE MISSION: TO MAKE SURE THEY STAY IN LINE...
..KINDA LIKE A WEDDING BAND...
JUST WAIT 'TILL WE GET TO THE HONEYMOON...



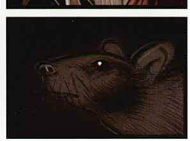
GOODBYE, COUSIN JULIE...

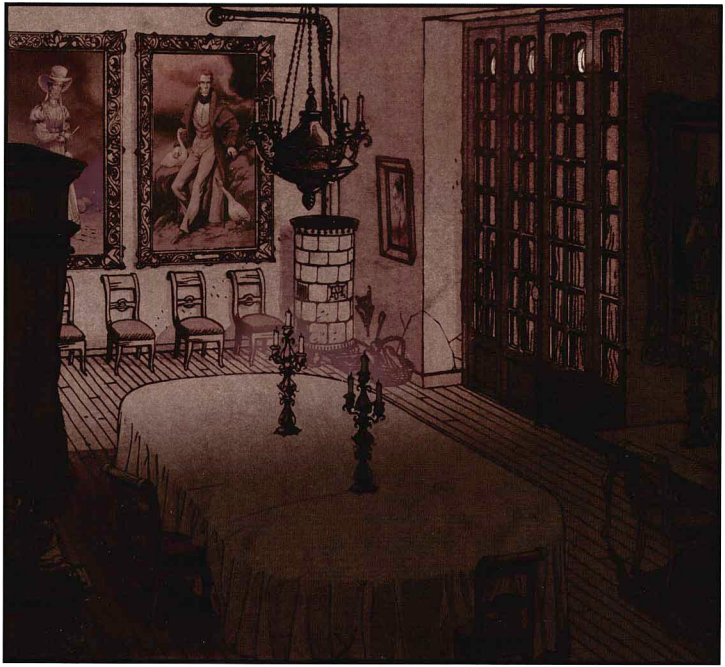
YOU SEEM IN GOOD SPIRITS, COMMISSIONER!
YOU'RE NOT? NOW THAT THESE REBELLIOUS DELINQUENTS ARE SEPARATED FROM THE POPULATION, ALL OF FRANCE CAN BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF... THE EMPEROR PARTICULARLY...
MMH... WATCHING THE SKY. I STILL WONDER, MR. GUIZOT...
...I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER IF THE GOVERNMENT IS BEING TOO HASTY. ANY SAILOR KNOWS IT'S BAD LUCK TO DEPART ON A FRIDAY...
COME NOW, WARDEN... IF CAYENNE IS SUPPOSED TO BE HEAVEN, THEN AS GOOD CHRISTIANS OF COURSE WE HAVE DOUBTS ON WHETHER THEY'LL MAKE IT THERE...
MMH... YES, THEN MAY GOD PROTECT THEM...

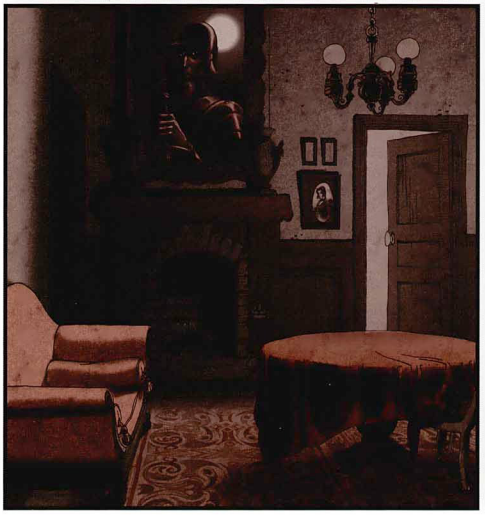
...SMELL THE SEA AIR!...
...I CAN ALMOST FEEL THE TROPICAL OCEAN SPRAY NOW...

...A NEW LIFE AWAITS US, MY PRETTY... BE IT IN CAYENNE OR ELSEWHERE...

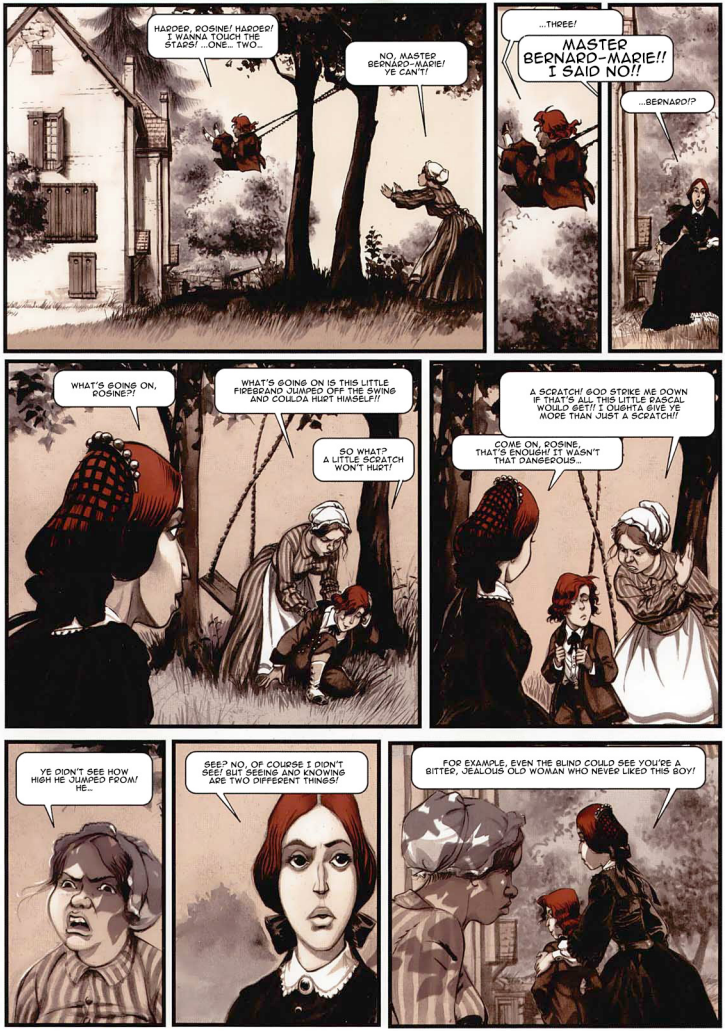
...LIGHTEN UP! THIS IS A NEW BEGINNING!







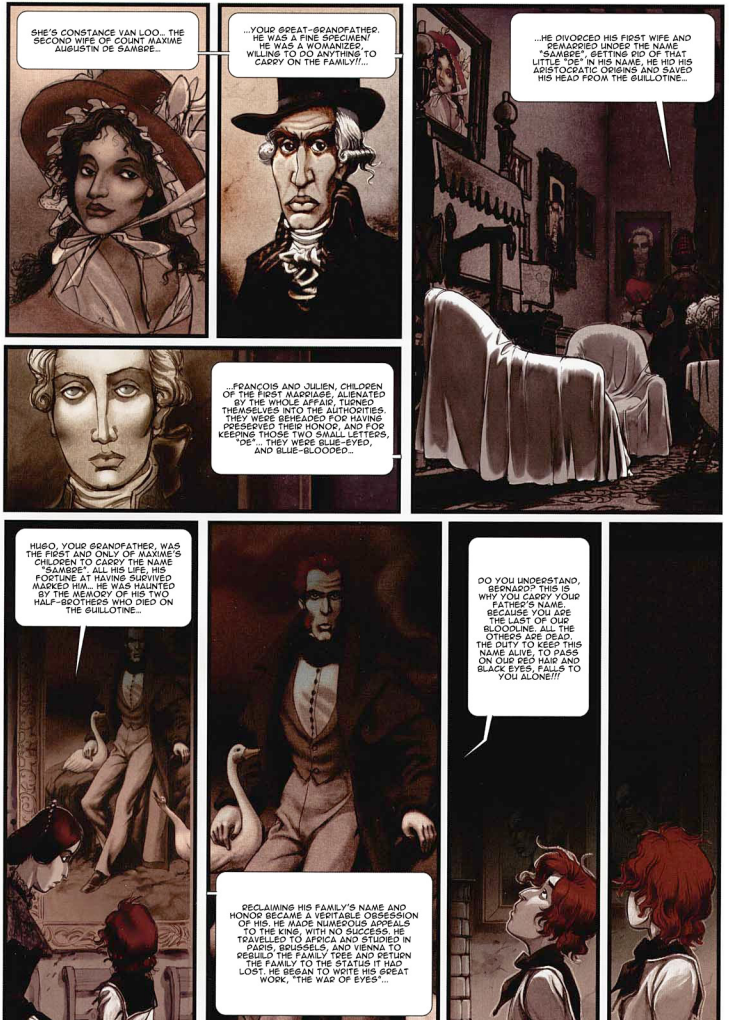
...BERNARD?!...


HARDER, ROSINE! HARDER! I WANNA TOUCH THE STARS! ...ONE... TWO...
NO, MASTER BERNARD-MARIE! YE CAN'T!
...THREE!
MASTER BERNARD-MARIE!! I SAID NO!!
...BERNARD!?
WHAT'S GOING ON, ROSINE?!
WHAT'S GOING ON IS THIS LITTLE FIREBRAND JUMPED OFF THE SWING AND COULDA HURT HIMSELF!!
SO WHAT? A LITTLE SCRATCH WON'T HURT!
A SCRATCH! GOD STRIKE ME DOWN IF THAT'S ALL THIS LITTLE RASCAL WOULD GET!! I OUGHTA GIVE YE MORE THAN JUST A SCRATCH!!
COME ON, ROSINE, THAT'S ENOUGH! IT WASN'T THAT DANGEROUS...
YE DIDN'T SEE HOW HIGH HE JUMPED FROM! HE...
SEE? NO, OF COURSE I DIDN'T SEE! BUT SEEING AND KNOWING ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS!
FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN THE BLIND COULD SEE YOU'RE A BITTER, JEALOUS OLD WOMAN WHO NEVER LIKED THIS BOY!

YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE ME A PROMISE, BERNARD.
WHAT'S THAT, AUNT SARAH?
YOU MUST NEVER SCARE ME LIKE THAT AGAIN! YOU COULD HAVE BEEN HURT! YOU COULD HAVE DIED!
A SAMBRE DOESN'T FEAR DEATH! YOU TAUGHT ME THAT!!
YOU POOR DEAR, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? YOU ARE THE LAST ONE! THE LAST OF THE SAMBRES!!...
...IF WE LOSE YOU, WE LOSE EVERYTHING ...
I'VE TOLD YOU ALREADY, ROSINE! YOU NEED TO BE NICER WITH THE LITTLE ONE! YOU'RE GOING TO END UP GETTING US KICKED OUT...
BUT MUM, IT'S NOT MY FAULT! THAT BRAT NEVER LISTENS...
BE QUIET! I'M TIRED OF YOUR LIES! THE TRUTH IS THAT YOU'RE JEALOUS! JEALOUS OF THIS CHILD! RECALL THAT HE IS THE ONLY CHILD OF THE LATE MASTER BERNARD, AND YOU AREN'T HIS MOTHER!!...
OH? AND WHO IS HIS MOTHER? MISS SARAH, PERHAPS?
QUIET, INSOLENT GIRL! YOU ARE JUST A SERVANT! GET BACK IN THEIR GOOD GRACES, OR ELSE...
...AND DO YOU REMEMBER COUSIN BETTE? YES, YOUR GRANDFATHER'S SISTER, YOUR GREAT AUNT... SHE'S DECIDED TO PAY US A VISIT NEXT WEEK. SHE'S BRINGING HER TWO BOYS...
CARROTS AGAIN? YUUUUCK!

...IT WOULD SEEM SHE'S HAD SOME MONEY TROUBLES LATELY... LET'S HOPE SHE ISN'T EXPECTING CHARITY...
COME ON! THEY'DE GOOD FOR YER EYES! YOUR AUNT WANTS YE TO EAT THEM...
REALLY? GOOD FOR YOUR EYES? WELL SHE MUST NOT HAVE EATEN VERY MANY!
MASTER BERNARD! YE OUGHT TO HAVE A SPANKING FOR MOCKING YER AUNT'S CONDITION!
A SPANKING OVER CARROTS?! REALLY ROSINE, YOU'D BE BETTER AT RAISING SHEEP. HE WAS ONLY JOKING!!
BUT MISS...
BAAAH MISS! BAAH! JUST LIKE I SAID! WHINING LIKE A SHEEP!!
THAT'S RIGHT! GET OUT! GO PEEL SOME ONIONS IN THE KITCHEN! AT LEAST YOU'D BE GOOD AT THAT!!
...BAAAH! BAAAAH!!...

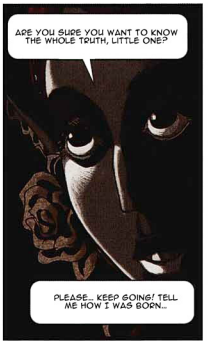
...AND THIS IS THE SKULL OF A HOMO SAPIEN NEANDERTHALIS... LOOK CLOSELY AT HIS JAW, MASTER BERNARD—MADIE... IT ALMOST LOOKS LIKE THAT OF AN APE...
...DO YOU SEE? OUR ANCESTORS, THE FIRST SONS OF ADAM, ALREADY HAD 32 TEETH, WHICH DIFFERENTIATED THEM FROM OTHER PRIMATES...
AHEM! YOU SEEM DISTRACTED, MY YOUNG FRIEND! DOES THE MYSTERY OF THE ORIGINS OF MAN NOT INTEREST YOU?
IT DOES! BUT...
...IN FACT, THE SUBJECT HAS ALWAYS BEEN OF INTEREST TO THE SAMBRES! AS HIS TUTOR, YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE SUBJECT WITH A CHILD!
...MY FATHER ENTHRALLED ME WITH HIS ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH... OH YES! TELL HIM OF HUGO SAMBRE! NOW THAT IS ONE SCIENTIFIC GENIUS WHO DID AMAZING WORK ON THE ORIGINS OF MAN... DID YOU KNOW THAT HE WAS MINING FOR COAL THAT HE FIRST DISCOVERED ONE OF THE GREATEST BURIAL SITES IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY?!
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, MISS SARAH, THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE MAKES NO MENTION OF HIM. I'VE READ JOUANNEAU, LYELL, BOUCHEZ DE PERTHES...
WELL NOW, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO EITHER SEARCH HARDER OR READ BETTER LITERATURE!... HE EVEN STARTED A BOOK ABOUT "THE WAR OF EYES"! I WASN'T ABLE TO FINISH IT, BUT HIS SON, BERNARD, CARRIED ON HIS WORK...
...YES, TELL HIM ABOUT MY BROTHER AS WELL, WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE REVOLUTION OF 1848... THAT WOULD GET THE BOY INTERESTED, THE LIFE OF HIS REAL FATHER... IT'S QUITE THE STORY! HE DIED A HERO!!
...AND MY MOTHER? WHAT WAS HER NAME?


SHE'S CONSTANCE VAN LOO... THE SECOND WIFE OF COUNT MAXIME AUGUSTIN DE SAMBRE...
...YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER. HE WAS A FINE SPECIMEN! HE WAS A WOMANIZER, WILLING TO DO ANYTHING TO CARRY ON THE FAMILY!!!...
...HE DIVORCED HIS FIRST WIFE AND REMARRIED UNDER THE NAME "SAMBRE", GETTING RID OF THAT LITTLE "DE" IN HIS NAME, HE HID HIS ARISTOCRATIC ORIGINS AND SAVED HIS HEAD FROM THE GUILLOTINE...
...FRANCOIS AND JULIEN, CHILDREN OF THE FIRST MARRIAGE, ALIENATED BY THE WHOLE AFFAIR, TURNED THEMSELVES INTO THE AUTHORITIES. THEY WERE BEHEADED FOR HAVING PRESERVED THEIR HONOR, AND FOR KEEPING THOSE TWO SMALL LETTERS, "DE"... THEY WERE BLUE-EYED, AND BLUE-BLOODED...
HUGO, YOUR GRANDFATHER, WAS THE FIRST AND ONLY OF MAXIME'S CHILDREN TO CARRY THE NAME "SAMBRE". ALL HIS LIFE, HIS FORTUNE AT HAVING SURVIVED MARKED HIM... HE WAS HAUNTED BY THE MEMORY OF HIS TWO HALF-BROTHERS WHO DIED ON THE GUILLOTINE...
RECLAIMING HIS FAMILY'S NAME AND HONOR BECAME A VERITABLE OBSESSION OF HIS. HE MADE NUMEROUS APPEALS TO THE KING, WITH NO SUCCESS. HE TRAVELLED TO AFRICA AND STUDIED IN PARIS, BRUSSELS, AND VIENNA TO REBUILD THE FAMILY TREE AND RETURN THE FAMILY TO THE STATUS IT HAD LOST. HE BEGAN TO WRITE HIS GREAT WORK, "THE WAR OF EYES"...
DO YOU UNDERSTAND, BERNARD? THIS IS WHY YOU CARRY YOUR FATHER'S NAME. BECAUSE YOU ARE THE LAST OF OUR BLOODLINE. ALL THE OTHERS ARE DEAD. THE DUTY TO KEEP THIS NAME ALIVE, TO PASS ON OUR RED HAIR AND BLACK EYES, FALLS TO YOU ALONE!!!

HAVE YOU NOTHING TO SAY? I CAN TELL THAT YOU ARE STILL DISTRACTED...
I'LL ASK ABOUT MY MOTHER'S NAME LATER, AUNTIE SARAH...
I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU A HUNDRED TIMES NOT TO CALL ME THAT STUPID NAME!! MUST I REMIND YOU EVERY THREE MINUTES, I'M NOT YOUR "AUNTIE"?!
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO CALL YOU? SARAH? MISS SARAH?
ANOTHER WORD AND YOU'LL BE PUNISHED, YOU INSOLENT CHILD!
STILL IGNORING ME?
STOP PLAYING WITH THAT SKULL AND ANSWER ME, BERNARD-MARIE!
WHY? YOU NEVER ANSWER MY QUESTIONS!!
YOU'RE WRONG, I'M GOING TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING! THE WHOLE TRUTH!! THAT IS WHY I'VE BROUGHT YOU HERE...

SAMBRE, MAY YOU WATCHED OVER IN MOONLIGHT
NEVER FORGET THAT! THAT IS THE SAMBRES' MOTTO... WHENEVER YOU NEED TO THINK, YOU CAN COME MEDITATE HERE. NOW, TAKE ME INTO THE MAUSOLEUM...
WATCHED OVER IN MOONLIGHT
...HERE! YOU CAN SIT DOWN! COME NOW, DON'T BE AFRAID! YOUR GRANDFATHER AND ALL YOUR ANCESTORS ARE HERE! YOU'RE AMONG FAMILY!!....
YOUR FATHER USED TO COME HERE TO PLAY WHEN HE WAS YOUR AGE...
DID HE PLAY WITH MY MOTHER HERE??

YOU'D BETTER NOT BE STARTING THAT AGAIN...
...ROSINE TOLD ME THAT HE KNEW MY MOTHER WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG...
AUNT SARAH! YOU PROMISED YOU'D ANSWER!!
WELL ROSINE LIED! WHAT ELSE DID THAT GIRL TELL YOU? SHE'S JUST INVENTING STORIES TO MAKE HERSELF SOUND MORE INTERESTING!!...
...ANYWAY. TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION. NO! NO. YOUR FATHER NEVER PLAYED WITH YOU MOTHER HERE!
...OH?
YOUR FATHER MET HER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PARIS...
...YES. IN PARIS. ONE EVENING BEFORE THE REVOLUTION. BEFORE HIS GLORIOUS DEATH FIGHTING ON THE BARRICADES...
...SHE HAD RED EYES... EVIL, BEWITCHING EYES... HE SUCCUMBED THE MOMENT HE SAW HER...
...SUCCUMBED? DOES THAT MEAN SHE KILLED HIM?
...NO! NOT EXACTLY! ...HOW CAN I EXPLAIN IT? YOU'RE SO YOUNG... YOUR FATHER WAS A HERO, BUT LIKE MANY MEN HE SOMETIMES HAD A WEAKNESS FOR WOMEN...
...ESPECIALLY WOMEN OF ILL REPUTE... YOUR MOTHER WAS ONE OF THOSE WOMEN...
WHAT'S "ILL REPUTE"? WAS MY MOTHER SICK??



...YOUR MOTHER DID EVERYTHING A WOMAN CAN DO TO FORCE YOUR FATHER TO FALL MADLY IN LOVE WITH HER... THEIR UNION LASTED ONLY ONE NIGHT... A NIGHT OF DECEPTION, WHEREIN SHE CONVINCED A ONCE NOBLE HEART THAT SHE WAS HELPLESS AND WEAK... OF COURSE, AT THE TIME SHE WAS WANTED FOR MURDER...

...AT DAWN, SHE LEFT HIM BEHIND AND FLED... MAD WITH GRIEF, HE JOINED HIS DESPERATE CRIES WITH THOSE OF THE CITIZENS, BELIEVING HE COULD SAVE HER...

...WHEN THE SOLDIERS ATTACKED. YOUR FATHER'S HEART WAS ALREADY GRAVELY INJURED. THE BULLETS ONLY FINISHED THE JOB... HOWEVER, THANKS TO HIM AND SEVERAL OTHERS, THE SECOND REPUBLIC WAS BORN...

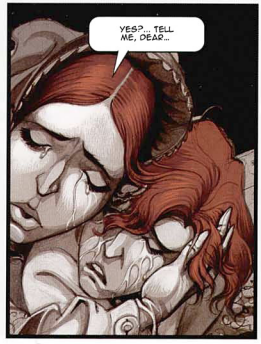
YOUR MOTHER WAS THE FIRST TO BENEFIT FROM THIS, SINCE "THE PEOPLE'S SPRING" OFFERED A CLEAN SLATE TO ALL MEN AND WOMEN. SHE WAS SEEN LIVING A COMFORTABLE LIFE IN THE COMPANY OF A NOTABLE AGITATOR, A MEMBER OF A SECRET REVOLUTIONARY SOCIETY... A FEW MONTHS LATER, IN JUNE, NEW BARRICADES WENT UP... YOUR MOTHER CLIMBED UP AND FOUGHT ONCE MORE, WITH A FUROR THAT MADE ONE THING CLEAR: SHE WISHED TO DIE AND TAKE HER CHILD WITH HER. THE CHAOS OF BATTLE SENT HER INTO PREMATURE LABOR, AND SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A BEAUTIFUL BABY BOY...

...WHO SHE PROMPTLY THREW AWAY, LEAVING HIM BEHIND IN THE STREETS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHTING... WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF OUR COUSIN GUIZOT, YOU WOULD EITHER BE IN AN ORPHANAGE OR IN HEAVEN RIGHT NOW...
IT'S NOT TRUE! I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!
OH MY POOR BOY, IF ONLY YOU KNEW... OF COURSE, WHEN THE POLICE CAUGHT THE VILE WOMAN, SHE WANTED TO TAKE YOU BACK. SHE SWORE TO GOD IN HEAVEN THAT SHE WAS A GOOD MOTHER AND THAT SHE HAD ONLY MEANT TO PROTECT YOU, LIKELY HOPING TO SOFTEN UP THE JUDGES. A MONTH LATER, SHE SOLD YOU, STILL AN INFANT, TO BUY A NEW DRESS...
...A RED DRESS, THE SAME COLOR AS HER EYES!...
HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS? YOU WEREN'T IN PARIS! AND IF MY FATHER DIED, WHO TOLD THIS TO YOU?
FIRST OF ALL, DON'T TALK BACK! I TOLD YOU, IT WAS YOUR UNCLE GUIZOT! HE'S A POLICE COMMISSIONER, AND HE KNOWS EVERYTHING!
OH YEAH? THEN WHAT WAS MY MOTHER'S NAME??
I SWEAR TO YOU, I DON'T KNOW HER NAME! PROSTITUTES NEVER HAVE NAMES, ONLY DISGUISES...
...RIGHT, ROSINE??
YES, MISS! IT'S EXACTLY LIKE YER COUSIN, COMMISSIONER GUIZOT, SAID! HE WAS EVEN FORCED TO GIVE THAT WOMAN A BIG SUM OF MONEY JUST TO GIVE THE CHILD A GOOD HOME!

YOU POOR DEAR! POOR LITTLE ORPHAN!

PLEASE, TELL ME HOW I CAN MAKE IT BETTER... I CAN'T STAND TO SEE YOU CRY! I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT!!

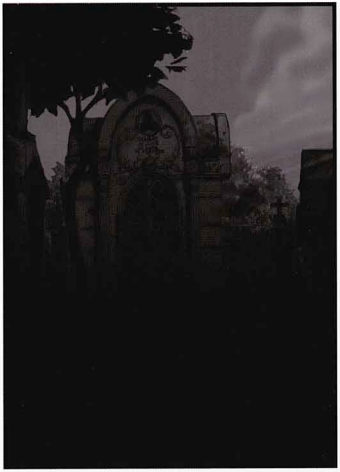
...YOU CAN EVEN CALL ME MUMMY IF YOU WANT...
...I... WANT...

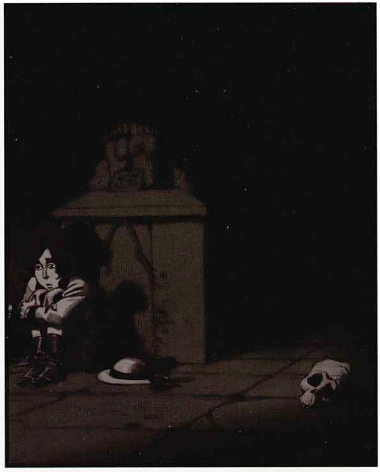

YES?... TELL ME, DEAR...

I WANT... I WANT A HORSEY!

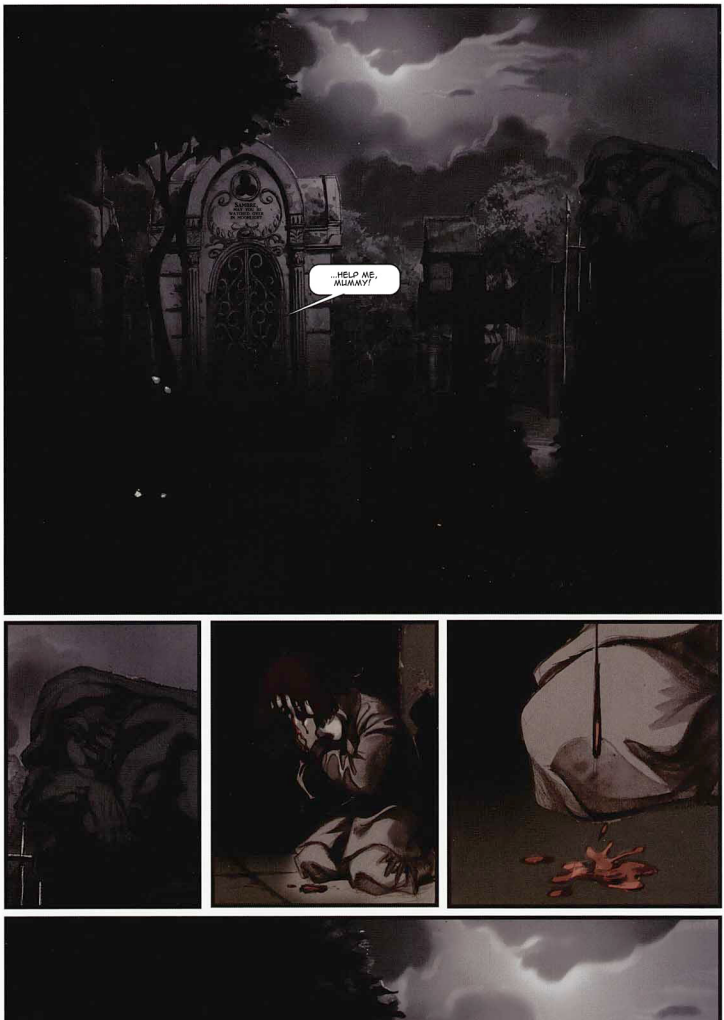
A HORSE!? NO, THAT'S SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE!
YOU SAID ANYTHING I WANTED!
YES, BUT HORSEBACK RIDING! THAT'S MUCH TOO DANGEROUS! IF YOU WERE HURT... IT'S YOUR LIFE AT STAKE!
SO YOU WERE LYING!!!
YOU'RE A LIAR, AUNTIE SARAH!! EVERYTHING YOU SAY IS LIES! AND I HATE YOU!!
OH? YOU HATE ME?
LOCK IT SHUT, ROSINE!
AUNTIE? LEMME OUT!
BUT MISS...
THIS IS NOT UP FOR DISCUSSION!

AUNTIE...?
YOU.. YOU'RE LEAVING? YOU'RE CAN'T LEAVE ME HERE!..
I'LL BE BACK TOMORROW... THAT SHOULD GIVE YOU TIME TO REFLECT ON YOUR INSOLENT BEHAVIOR!
PLEASE, AUNTIE! FORGIVE ME! FORGIVE ME FOR TALKING BACK!! I WON'T DO IT AGAIN!!
WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS AGAIN TOMORROW, BERNARD--MADIE! GOOD NIGHT!!
...THAT'S RIGHT, UNTIL TOMORROW! AND NOTHING TO EAT UNTIL HE'S APOLOGIZED!!!...
I IMPLORE YE, MISS... A WHOLE NIGHT WITH NO SUPPER? HE'S SO LITTLE...
IT'S FOR HIS OWN GOOD, ROSINE. HE MUST LEARN!





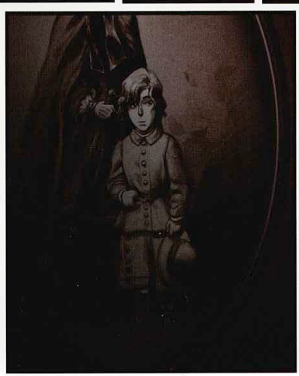
YOU'RE EXACTLY LIKE YOUR FATHER, LITTLE BERNARD-MARIE...
...EXACTLY LIKE HIM!...
...JUST DON'T MOVE! A SAMBRE'S NEVER SCARED! A SAMBRE'S...
...NE...VER... S... SCARED?!...
AAAAH! NO!... NOOOOO!!!!
...MUMMY!...
...I'M SCARED!...
...MUMMY!...


..HELP ME, MUMMY!

THREE RED FLASHES... THAT'S THE SIGNAL FROM ÎLE DE SEIN! WE'RE STILL IN FRANCE, LADIES...
USE YOUR HEAD, IDIOT! THEY PICKED UP THE MEN FROM ÎLE DE RÉ, AND NOW THEY'RE GOING TO LOAD UP ON COAL IN CARDIFF TO SELL IN CHILE... DON'T THINK THE CAPTAIN WOULDN'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY...

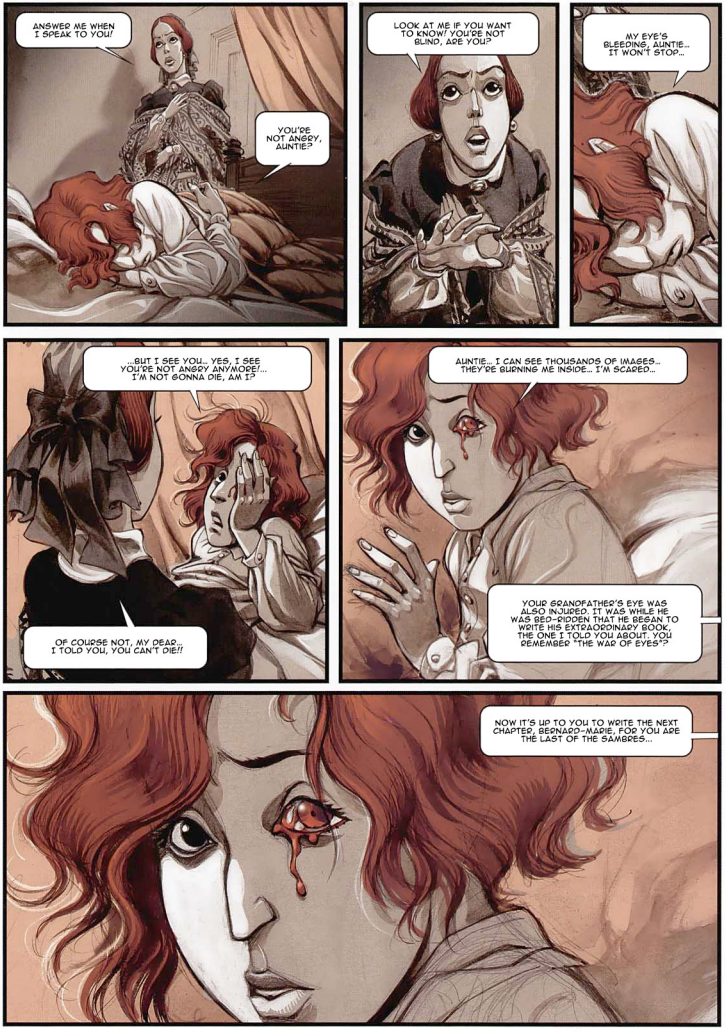
YOU KNOW WHAT THE SAILORS SAY? "HE WHO SEES SEIN, SEES HIS END"...
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

THAT MEANS YE'D BETTER GET SOME SLEEP WHILE YE CAN, DEAR! GOT ABOUT THREE WEEKS 'FORE WE REACH THE TROPICS...



WHO ARE YOU, LITTLE ANGEL? I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT YOU... EVEN THOUGH I CARRIED YOU FOR SEVEN MONTHS AND HEARD YOU CRY AS YOU OPENED YOUR EYES FOR THE FIRST TIME...
YOU HAD GREAT BIG BLACK EYES... LIKE YOUR FATHER...
IF SOME NIGHT YOU HAPPEN TO THINK OF YOUR MOTHER, CLOSE YOUR EYES, MY LITTLE ANGEL, AND REMEMBER THAT YOU ONCE SLEPT INSIDE ME... MAYBE MY WOMB WILL REMEMBER YOU ...
...WHEREVER I GO, I'LL CARRY YOU WITH ME...

...YES, MISS SARAH! GASPARD BROUGHT HIM BACK FROM THE CEMETERY AT ONE IN THE MORNING. COMPLETELY TERRORISED, HE WAS!...
...POOR THING! HE DIDN'T GET A WINK OF SLEEP ALL NIGHT! HE GOT HURT AS WELL...
OH IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS... A RAT SCARED HIM AND THE POOR BOY POKED HIS EYE... IT WAS VERY MINOR, THANKFULLY...
HUH? ENOUGH TO DRAW BLOOD?
HE'S STILL BLEEDING, ISN'T HE?
...BUT LIKE I SAID, IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS! ...JUST A SCRATCH!
OUT OF THE WAY, IDIOT! DIDN'T YOU KNOW? HE'S A HEMOPHILIAC!!
IT'S ME, BERNADO--MARIE... CAN YOU SEE ME?


ANSWER ME WHEN I SPEAK TO YOU!
YOU'RE NOT ANGRY, AUNTIE?
LOOK AT ME IF YOU WANT TO KNOW! YOU'RE NOT BLIND, ARE YOU?
MY EYE'S BLEEDING, AUNTIE... IT WON'T STOP...
...BUT I SEE YOU... YES, I SEE YOU'RE NOT ANGRY ANYMORE!... I'M NOT GONNA DIE, AM I?
OF COURSE NOT, MY DEAR. I TOLD YOU, YOU CAN'T DIE!!
AUNTIE... I CAN SEE THOUSANDS OF IMAGES... THEY'RE BURNING ME INSIDE... I'M SCARED...
YOUR GRANDFATHER'S EYE WAS ALSO INJURED. IT WAS WHILE HE WAS BED-RIDDEN THAT HE BEGAN TO WRITE HIS EXTRAORDINARY BOOK, THE ONE I TOLD YOU ABOUT. YOU REMEMBER "THE WAR OF EYES"?
NOW IT'S UP TO YOU TO WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER, BERNARD-MARIE, FOR YOU ARE THE LAST OF THE SAMBRES...

YSLAIRE
SAMBRE
SAMBRE
I knew you'll come...
II
YSLAIRE
SAMBRE
Liberty, Liberty...
III
YSLAIRE
SAMBRE
Must we die together?
Glénat
YSLAIRE
SAMBRE
Cursed be the fruit of thy wombs...
Glénat
73 4052.4
9 782723 435482
2-7234-3548-2